A TREATISE OF RULING ELDERS AND DEACONS.

In which, these things which [illegible] to the understanding of [illegible] Office and Duty, are clearly and shortly set down.

By a Minister of the [illegible] SCOTLAND.

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1 Tim. 5. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour.*

1 Tim. 3. 13. *They that have used the Office of a Deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

EDINBURGH,
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The Preface.

THe LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem, *hath in depths of his wisdom* spoken by terrible things in righteousness *against this Nation*, *he hath* brought us down wonderfully, *and hath made* our breach wide as the Sea, who can heal us? our bruise is incurable, and our wound is grievous, *for the* Lord hath wounded us with the wound of an Enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, because our sins were encreased, *he hath* mingled a perverse spirit in the midst of us, which causeth

Isa. 31. 9

Psal. 65 5.

Lam. 1. 9.

Lam. 2. 13:

Jer. 30. 12. 14.

Isa 19. 14.

us to erre in every work,
Isa. 9. 20. a drunken man staggereth
his vomit, and we eat ever
man the flesh of his own arm
for all this his anger is no
turned away, but his hand
Lam. 1. 14. stretched out still, the yok
of our transgressions is boun
by his hand, they are wreath
ed, and come up upon ou
neck, and in the day of ou
Lam. 2. 1. calamity, he hath covere
us with a cloud in his ange
Is. 59. 10. that like blind men in th
dark we grope for the wall
and cannot find either our f
or our duty: some cry, th
there be many of our Prophe
Lam. 2. 14. who have not discovered ou
iniquity to turn away ou
captivity: *others complai*
that not a few of them, ha

see

ſeen for us falſe burdens and cauſes of baniſhment; *what ſhall we do whilſt it's thus with us?* ſurely it is meet to be ſaid unto God, Job 10. 2. ſhew me why thou contendeſt with me, Job 34. 31, 32. I have born Chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more, that which I ſee not, teach thou me, if I have done iniquity, I will do no more; *untill the Lord ſhall reveal it unto us,* Jer. 9. 12. *and make* us wiſe in heart to underſtand *this*, *and ſpeak to us*, that we may declare it, for what the Land mourns. *It is fit that in the things of the Lord's controverſie, and of our duty whereto we have already attained, we walk by the ſame rule, and minde the ſame things. I do ſuppoſe that all of us are of one minde in this, that our corrupt mixture in Church members, and Church-officers, are one main*

cauſe,

cauſe, why ſo much wrath is go
forth from the Lord againſt us, an
doth abide upon us. The Lord's deſig
upon Scotland *for a long time pa*
ſeems to have been to purg
Ezek. 24 13. his houſe, *and* as to hav
Iſa. 1. 25.
Ezek, 20. 38. his ordinances pure, ſo t
Zeph. 3. 9. have his people and h
Officers alſo pure; *I mean not of*
higher pitch than the doctrine and p
licie of our Church doth reach, b
cauſe (I fear not to ſay it) the me
ſuring line of the Sanctuary hath bee
ſtretched over theſe, o give unto the
due Scripture dimenſions, concerni
the qualification of Church member
and Church Officers: If in the
things our practice were agreeable
our rule, we needed not be aſhame
but might ſpeak with our Enemies i
the gate, and anſwer him that re
proacheth us, our ſin is, that bein
weigh

weighed in our own ballance, we are found too light; how many Church-members are there in Scotland, *whom our Church discipline (if conscientiously weilded) would cut off as rotten, How many Church-Officers, whom that disciplin would cast out as unsavory salt?* we have rejoyced in our pride and been haughty becauſe of the Lord's holy mountain, *but have not ſo zealouſly cared, that* holineſs to the Lord might be engraven in all the pots of his houſe. *We have boaſted of a Reformation of the Ordinances, without ſeeking as really to reform Church Officers, and Church-Members, according to the Pattern thereof. Pure Ordinances are indeed things precious and excellent, (and what ſoul among us that hath any meaſure of the true*

Zeph. 3, 11.

Zech. 14. 20. 21.

Zeal

Zeal of the Lords house, can behold the defacing of these, and not make the matter of their lamentation) yet these are but means subordinate to a more high and super-excellent end, to wit, that we may thereby be brought

2 Cor. 3. 18. with open face to behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and be changed unto the same Image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord

Ephes. 4. 13. *that* we may all come unto the unity of the faith, unto the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. *It is true, that all the Members of the Church visible, will*

Mat. 20. 16. *not* be living and lively stones in the Lords temple, *neither doth the rule of Church-constitution, hold out or cast out all*

who are not really ſuch; but this is the great ſcope that all of us ought to dwell at, that all the Lords people may be holy that all who profeſs faith in Jeſus Chriſt, may walk as becomes the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. *And how ſhall this be attained, unleſs theſe who bears the Veſſels of the Lord, and to whom the charge of holy things be committed be holy,* the ſons of *Levi* muſt be purified, and purged as gold and as ſilver, *before they offer unto the Lord* an offering in righteouſneſs, *when that is done, then are* the offerings of Judah and Jeruſalem pleaſant unto the Lord. *I acknowledge that we were once upon a fair way for purging the Houſe of God in this Land, they who interrupted us ſhall bear their burden; but what was done in this thing, was*

Pſal. 93. 5.

Phil. 1. 27.

Mal. 3. 3, 4.

not more refreshing to gracious hearts, than it was sorely repined at, and opposed by others (a sin that provoked the Lord to stop the current of so rich a mercy) therefore do many now make haste again to intrude themselves upon the Congregations whence they were once justly cast out, and not a few amongst the People love to have it so, as though there were a conspiracy to return to Egypt, and to build again the walls of Jericho, and repair the ruines of Edom. I do also acknowledge it with thankfulness unto the great Shepherd of Souls, that there is a great company of gracious men amongst the Officers of his Church, who walk in the ways of the Lord, and keep his charge, but there be also many that neither do so, nor know how to do it; To say nothing of Ministers: It is more than manifest, that there is a generation of ignorant, slothfull, earthly minded men, who bear the name of Elders and Deacons in many Congregations, and where such bear rule, what can be expected, but that the People should perish for want of knowledge, and holiness be despised, and ly in the dust, and

and Congregations still abide in so swarthy a temper, If we might find grace in the Lords sight, to be throughly convinced of this great Church-evil, whence many Church evils flow, and be brought with some measure of sincerity to endeavour the remedy thereof, what a branch of hope might it be, that our reproach should be taken away, and we become a People instructed in the way of the Lord, and walking to the Praise and Commendation of the Gospel, which is now evil spoken of, because of the ignorance, and loose conversation of many among us: Therefore am I bold as pressed in spirit (albeit one of the weakest and most unworthy) to offer this little Treatise, with an eye upon this end. And let me without offence, beseech all the Ministers, Elders, Deacons, Congregations, Presbyteries, and Assemblies of this Church, in the bowels of the Lord Jesus Christ: yea, let me obtest them by the blood of the everlasting Covenant, by their Zeal of the Lord's honour, by the credite of the Gospel, by their love to souls, and by the fury of the Ezek. 24. 13. Lord,

Lord, which he hath caused to rest upon us, because he purged us, and would not be purged; *and as they desire* the Lord should bring us again, *and cause us* stand before him, and leave us a remnant, and give us a nail in his holy place; *that they would each of them in their stations, endeavour* to take forth the precious from the vile, *and purge the Lord's house in this Land from corrupt Officers, and corrupt members*. Oh, will we not be made clean? When will it once be?

Ezra. 9. 8,

Jer. 15. 19.

Jer. 13. 27.

To

To the CHRISTIAN READER.

THe *inducements that perſwaded me firſt to write, and then to publiſh this little Treatiſe of* Ruling Elders and Deacons, *were chiefly theſe,* 1. *The ſenſible Impreſſion that the Lord hath made upon my Spirit, as alſo (I know) upon the ſpirits of the godly of the Land, of the great prejudice that comes to this poor Church by a multitude of men in theſe offices, who neither know their duty, nor make conſcience to perform it.* 2. *The vindicating the Doctrine of our Church concerning theſe Church-Officers, that the mouths of ſuch who ſpeak evil may be ſtopped, and others who ſtumble may be ſatisfied.* 3.

The

The pressing desire of Brethren, Ministers, and Elders in the Presbytery and Congregation, where the Lord hath sho me; all which did receive some spirit and life, when I found my Name among those to whom the Gen. Assembly of Church did commit and recomm this work long ago.

I have endeavoured to handle it wit as much plainness and evidence Truth, and as shortly, without wronging of the matter as I could: It is not unlik that some may think, that I have done no great business, because I have brought no new thing. I acknowledge that it is so; what I have said, is for the matter (I trust) and in many things for the words too, the Doctrine of the Scriptures, and of Protestant Divines, and of our Church, in the Acts and Policy thereof; I have but put together in one, and digested into some Method what was lying

scattered.

scattered of before, that these who either could not, or would not be at the pains to search for such things, may now have them at their hand. Others may look upon this Treatise as not plain enough, [illegible]s not so exact, full, and perfect as [illegible]ght to be; with these I shall not [illegible]ntend; I have done what I could, at [illegible]ast what I conceived best in order to the ends I propounded to my self; If others shall find favour of the Lord to do better, I shall blesse his Name on their behalf, and receive and make use of their pains with thankfulness. And some may happily think, that there is here too much laid upon Ruling-Elders, more nor they shall be able or willing to undertake; yea, more than the Lord doth require of them, most of the things that are mentioned by us being incumbent to Ministers rather than to Elders. It is true what is said of the El-

ders

ders duty, is also the duty of Ministers; for whatsoever the Elder *ought to do by vertue of his Calling, that also ought the Minister to do, and somewhat more, but so far as we know, nothing is spoken here of the* Elder, *that doth not belong to him; if through ignorance or want of abilitie, or neglect, or custome, Elders have not done these things, it is that which ought to be helped, it is now high time for them to awake, and to know and owne, and follow their duty; and for the Church of God in* Scotland, *to know how much she hath smarted under the hands of ignorant and slothful, yea and scandalous men; we would not alwayes satisfie our selves with disguised and histrionical men, puffed up with Titles or with Idols, dead in sins to be Elders; but would seek after holy men, who being endued with faith*

Iunius Eccles. l. 2. c. 3.

faith in God, and walking in his obedience, God authorizing them, and the Church his Spouse chooſing them, and calling them, undertake the Government thereof, that they may labour to the conſervation and Edification of the ſame in Chriſt; *Neither needs the qualification, or multitude, or difficulties of the particulars here ſpoken of, diſcourage or ſcarr any: It is not ſo much the meaſure as the truth of the thing that is to be looked at. We have ſet down what a* Ruling Elder *ought to be, in regard of the whole extent of his Charge, ſundry particulars whereof the moſt part of Ruling Elders are ſeldom called to exerciſe, and if they be in ſome meaſure fitted for theſe parts of the charge which God calls them to exercile, and follow the ſame with ſingleneſs of heart, they may believe that*

they

they ſhall be aſſiſted, and accepted
God in Jeſus Chriſt; the Imploymen
is not theirs, but the Lords, from whom
they may expect both their furniture
and alſo their reward; let them ariſ
and be doing, and the Lord ſhall b
with them.

A Short

TREATISE OF Ruling Elders.

CHAP. I.

Of their Names.

WHat is neceſſary to be underſtood concerning *Ruling* Elders may be taken up in the explication of theſe four, 1. Their name. 2. Their inſtitution. 3. Their Calling. 4. Their Qualification and Duty.

The word Elder in the Scripture doth ſignifie divers things, 1. It ſignifieth old men, or men come to age: 1 *Tim.* 5. 1. *Rebuke not an Elder, but intreat him as a father, and*

the

The 2 book of Diſc. c. 6. Si. Aſſert: of the Government of the Ch. of Scotland. 1. part. cap: 1. 1 Tim. 5. 1.

the younger men as br. 6.
thren. 2. It ſignifies thoſe who hav
lived in the times of old
Mat. 15. 2. *Mat.* 15. 2. *Why do th*
Diſciples tranſgreſs the tradition
the Elders. 3. It is taken for honou
able and worthy men, *Iſa.* 3. 2. *Th*
Lord of Hoſts doth take away fro
Jeruſalem and Judah the Prudent a
the Ancient. 4. It is the name of
Spiritual Officer in the houſe of Go
Acts 14. 23. *Acts* 14. 23. *And whe*
they had ordained them E
ders in every city. In this la ſigni
fication it is taken in this place, fo
theſe who bear Ruſe in the Houſe
God, who are called Elders becauſe
the Knowledge, Gifts, Experience
Prudence and Gravity, wherewit
they ought to be indued.

The Officers in th
House of God, who
th

br. 6. sect. 1. the Scriptures are called
nay the name of Elders, are of severall
ol rts, Preaching Elders or Ministers,
th eaching Elders or Doctors, and
r uling or Governing Elders, all these
ou hree are often times in the N. T. com-
Th rized under the general name of El-
ro der, *Act.* 15 6, 22. & 20.
an Acts 15. 6. 22. nd 20 17. 17. 1. *Pet.* 5 It is the Ru-
of Pet. 5. ling Elder whom we
Go *The 2. book of Disc. C. 6. S. 3.* have now to do with,
he who is so called, not
El because the power of ruling and go-
gn verning the Church belongs to him
fo lone, for it also belongs to the Preach-
e ng and Teaching *Elders*, or to the
e Ministers and Doctors: But because
nc to rule and govern is the principal
it and chief part of his Charge and Im-
ployment, it is the highest Act of
th his Office; It is not competent for
o i him to Preach, that belongs to the
th Pastor or Minister, nor to teach, that

be-

belongs to the Doctor; but his Offi
is comprized within the compasse
Ruling and Governing the Church
and therefore he is called the Gove
ning or Ruling Elder; The Apostle
Rom. 12. 8 the Epist'e to the Rom
ch. 12. 8. calleth him, *hi*
that ruleth, and 1 Cor.
1 Cor. 12. 28. 12. 28. he calls them *Go*
vernments putting the abstract fo
the concret, Governments for Gover
nours. Thus then we have the
proper or right name of these
Church Officers, which serves to
correct a twofold mistake. The
1. is, of these who either out of ig-
norance, or disdain, do call them
Lay-Elders, as if they were a part o
the People only, and not to be reck-
oned amongst the Officers of the
Lords House, whom the Popish
Church in their pride, and others fol-

lowing

owing them calls the Clergy, that is, he Lords Inheritance, in opposition o the Laity or People, whom they ook upon, as base and much inferi- r to the other in worth and *Excel-* ency, whereas all the Lords People re his portion, *and the lot of his inhe- itance*, *Deut.* 32. 9 1. *Pet.* 5. 3. The ec nd mistake is, of these who do all these only Ruling-*Elders*, who it in Presbyteries, Synods, and Gen- ral Assemblies, allowing to others he name of *Elders*, but not of Rul- ng-*Elders*: But every *Elder* in the Lords House is a Ruling-*Elder*, be- cause the power and exercise of rule and Government belongs to every *Elder*, though some of them upon speciall occasions be called to a more eminent *Exercise* of it than others.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the Institution of Ruling-Elders.

The 2 book of Discip. Ch. 6. sect. 2.

THE Institution o the Office of Ru ling Elder, is divine, it not an ordinance of man, but of God The Lord Jesus, upon whose shoul der the Government is, and who faithfull in all his House, hath in hi Eternal Wisdom thought fit to ap point such an Officer in his House for the right and orderly Governing thereof. It is true, that by the sloth or rather by the pride of Teachers whilest they alone would seem to b somewhat, and by the policy of Sa tan, and inadvertance of the Church these Officers were for many Age together, out of use in the Christian

Church

Church. But certain it is, that both the Jewiſh Synagogue, and after, the Chriſtian Church had *Seniores*, or Elders, without whoſe counſel nothing was done in the Church; That the Jewiſh Church had ſuch, appears from 2 *Chro.* 19. 8. *Jer.* 29. 1. *Mat.* 16. 21, 22, 23, 26, 57, 59. *Act.* 4. 5. And that the Chriſtian Church alſo had them in the primitive & pureſt times thereof, appears from the teſtimony of ancient Writers, as may be found by theſe who will take pains to ſearch into theſe things. But we have a more ſure word for the Divine Inſtitution of Elders in the Chriſtian Church, then any teſtimony of man, to wit, the Teſtimony of God, in the Scriptures of

Ambroſ. Com. on 1. Tim. 5. 1. *Tert.* in his 34 Ch. of Apol. *Baſil. Mag.* Com. on Iſay 3. 2. *Hier.* on that ſame place. *Aug. Ep.* 137. *Greg. con. Celſ. lib.* 3. *Aug. l.* 3. *contra Creſcen. Cap.* 56.

the New Testament. The first p
of Scripture is *Rom.* 12.6,7,8. *Ha*
then gifts, differing according to
grace that is given us, whether pro
sie, let us propheſie according to the
portion of faith, or Miniſtery, le
wait on our Miniſtring, or he
teacheth on teaching, or he that exh
eth on exhortation; he that gives
him do it with ſimplicity: he that ru
with diligence, he that ſheweth me
with cheerfulneſſe. In which Text,
Apoſtle doth firſt comprehend
the ſeverall kindes of ordinary ſta
ing Officers in the Church of G
under two general Heads, to w
Prophecie, whereby is meaned
ordinary facultie of right und
ſtanding and expounding the Sc
tures, and Miniſtery, under wh
is comprehended all other Chu
Officers and Imployments: To e

Of theſe the Apoſtle addeth their generall duties, to wit, that he who propheſieth, ſhould do it according to the proportion of faith, *h.e.* according to the meaſure, of the meaſure of knowledge of the word of faith, that he hath received of God; And he that miniſters, let him wait on his miniſtring, *h. e* let him not do it negligently or ſlothfully, but faithfully and diligently. Then he ſub-divides theſe two Generalls, into the ſpeciall Offices contained under them; He divides him that propheſieth, into him that teacheth, and him that exhorteth, or into the Doctor, to whom the word of teaching or Inſtruction belongs, and the Paſtor, to whom the Word of Exhortation is competent. Under him that miniſtereth, he comprehends, firſt him that giveth, by whom is meant the

Deacon, who is appointed for t
ſupply of the poor. Secondly, h
that ruleth, by whom can be mea
no other then the Ruling Elder, ſe
ing an ordinary ruling Officer in t
Church, who is different from t
Paſtor and Teacher is here ſpok
of by the Apoſtle.

The ſecond place of Scripture th
proves the Office of Ruling Elders
1 *Cor.* 12. 28. *And God hath ſet ſo*
in the Church, firſt Apoſtles, ſecon
ly Prophets, thirdly Teachers, afte
ward miracles, then gifts of healin
helps, governments, kinds of tongu
Some of the Bibles of the late E
gliſh Tranſlation read *helps in gover*
ments, but croſs to the Text in t
firſt Language, that bears *helps, g*
vernments, as two diſtinct thing
and therefore in other Editions
that Tranſlation, this is helped.

his Text the Apoſtle reckons ſeveral
fficers of the Church, ſome extra-
rdinary, which were to continue
ut for a ſeaſon, ſuch as Apoſtles,
rophets, Powers or Miracles, gifts
healing, kinds of tongues: Some
rdinary, which were to continue
the Church to the end of the
orld, and theſe are Teachers, or
e ordinary Church-Officers, who
e exerciſed in the Word: *Helps*, *h.*
the Deacons, who are appointed
r the help and relief of the poor;
d *governments*, *h. e.* the Governing
d Ruling Elders; for it is clear from
e words, that the Apoſtle by Go-
rnments, doth mean a Church-Of-
er, whom God hath ſet in his
hurch, for Ruling and Governing
ereof, now this cannot be any o-
er of the Church-Officers, for theſe
hath named beſides, and therefore

it remains that it is the Ruling Elder.

The third place of Scripture is 1 *Tim* 5 17. *Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, ſpecially they that labour in the word and doctrine.* Which Text doth hold forth and diſtinguiſh two ſorts of Elders in the Church, to whom the Lord Jeſus hath committed the power of Ruling; One ſort who do alſo labour in the Word and Doctrine, to wit, Paſtors and Teachers. Another ſort who do only Rule and doing it well, are accounted worthy of double honour, and theſe are the Ruling Elders of whom we ſpeak.

From this tha

2. *Book of Diſcipl.* c. 3. ſect. 13, 14, 15, 16. *Aſſert: of the go-*

the Office of th Ruling Elder of Divine Inſti

vernmen

ernment of the Church of Scotland, part 1. c. 2. pag. 11. and 17.

tution, we gather theſe concluſions, First, that it is not a thing arbitrary and indifferent for ſuch to wait upon their charge, yea or not, as they pleaſe, as their attendance may contribute for their own or their friends particular, which is the cuſtom of too too many Elders; but that they are bound in conſcience diligently to attend and follow the duties thereof, whether they be ſuch as they ought, to the ſeveral Members of the Congregation, or the keeping of Seſſion, Presbytery, and other Aſſemblies of the Church, when they are called and deſired thereto.

Secondly, that Elders ought to do their Office, not formally and hypocritically, for the faſhion only, but

ſincerely and honeſtly, as in the ſig
of God, by whom they are called u
to this holy Calling, and to who
they muſt render an accompt of th
diſcharge of this great truſt.

Thirdly, they ought not to dom
neer over their fellow Brethren a
Elders, but carry themſelves hu
bly and ſerviceably, as theſe who a
appointed of the Lord Jeſus for mi
ſtring unto, and edifying of his B
dy the Church.

Fourthly, that they ought to ca
ry themſelves with that authorit
holineſs, gravity and prudence, th
becomes theſe who are called of Go
to bear Rule in his Houſe.

Fifthly, that Elders once lawfull
called to the Office, and having gi
from God meet to exexciſe the ſam
(unleſs they be removed therefro
becauſe of miſcarriages) are ſtill E
ders

ers, thogh happily in Congregations where many qualified men may be found, some may be permitted for a time to surcease from the exercise of the charge, and others be put in their room, as was among the Levites under the Law, in serving in the Temple by courses.

2. *Book of Discip. ch.* 6. *ct.* 3.

Sixthly, that people ought to obey such as these who have the rule over them, and to submit themselves, because they wait for their souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, Heb. 13. 17. Yea, they would know them as these who are over them in the Lord, and do admonish them, and esteem them very highly in love for their works sake, 1 *Thes.* 5. 12, 13.

CHAP. II.

Of the Vocation or Calling of Ruling Elders.

2 *Book of dis.* cap. 3. AS no man is to intrude in any employment without lawful Calling, so much less ought any man to intrude himself without a Calling, into any sacred Function in the House of God: *Heb.* 5. 4. Therefore before any take upon him to exercise the Office of Ruling Elder he ought to be lawfully called thereunto. This Calling is inward or outward; the inward Calling is the Testimony of a good Conscience, concerning some measure of ability and gifts for the Charge, and a sincere

and honeſt inclination and purpoſe to imploy theſe gifts, for the honour of God, the advancement of the Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt, and the good of ſouls.

The outward Calling is to be after the ſame manner with that of other Church-officers, and it ſtands in their Election, and in the tryal of their carriage, gifts, and admiſſion to the Charge. The Election is to be made by the Congregation wherein they are to bear charge, *Acts* 6. 3, 5. and 14. 23.

1. *Book of diſcip. 8. head, touching the Election of Elders and Deacons.*

That it may be gone about in the more orderly way, it is fit that a nomination be made by the Miniſter and Elderſhip of the Congregation of the perſons fitteſt, and beſt qualified for the imploy-

ment;

ment, and that the names of the pe
ſons nominated by them, be pu
lickly intimated to the Congrega
on, and they deſired, in caſe of the
not being ſatisfied, as having exce
tion, or knowing others better qu
lified, to repreſent the ſame to the
Miniſter and Elderſhip. If there b
no Elderſhip in the Congregation, i
nomination may be made either b
the Presbytery, or by the moſt judi
cious and godly Members of the
Congregation; particularly Maſter
of Families, together with the Mi
niſter, or one or more Miniſters o
the Presbytery, in caſe of the Con
gregations want of a Miniſter.

1. Book of diſcipline 8 head

The trial is to be by th
Miniſter and Elderſhip
of the Congregation, o
in caſe of the want of theſe, by th
Presbytery: And they are to be try
e

ed both in regard of their converſa-
ion, that it be blameleſs and holy,
and alſo in regard of their knowledge
nd experience in the things of God,
nd of the Affairs of his Houſe, and
f their ability and prudence for Go-
vernment; It is true that the trial
f Elders in their knowledge and
gifts required for their Charge, hath
not been much in uſe in this Church;
t being taken for granted, that con-
ſcience would be made of making
choiſe of ſuch as had knowledge, and
were able and fit, or that if any ig-
norant, or not able and fitted, were
nominat, that ſome of the Congrega-
tion upon the intimation of their
names, would except againſt them;
but by this means it hath come to
paſs, that many ignorant and unqua-
lified men have been admitted El-
ders in many Congregations, to the
great

great detriment of Religion, and ma
ſmall reproach of our Church: The
Apoſtle 1 *Tim.* 3. 10. ſpeaking
Deacons, which is the loweſt ran
of the Officers of the Church, re
quires that theſe alſo firſt be pro
ed, then let them uſe the Office
a Deacon, being found blameleſs
And the ſame reaſons and groun
that plead for the tryal of a Mi
ſter, pleads alſo for the tryal of
ders, in a way ſuitable to the qu
lifications required in them.

See the manner of Electing and admitting Miniſters and Elders, prefixed to the old Pſalm Book.

Their Admiſſi
is to be by the Mi
niſter of the Co
gregation, or o
appointed by t
Presbytery, in t
preſence of the whole Congrega
on, with the Preaching of the Wo
concerning their duty, and wi

Pray

rayer and Humiliation, concerning
The ſpirit of their Calling to be pour-
g out upon them, and that the
an easure of the *Lord* may proſper in
eir hands: At which time they are
ro lemnly to engage themſelves be-
e ore the *Lord*, to be faithful, and dili-
eſent, and watchful over the flock
un mmitted to their charge, and in all
lin e duties of that holy and honour-
f ble imployment; and the *People*
qu e alſo to engage themſelves to o-
ey them, and to ſubmit themſelves
ſſi them in the Lord, and to honour
Mem, and highly to eſteem them in
Co ve for their works ſake.

o

CHAP. IV.

Of the Duties of a Ruling Elder.

THe Duties of a Ruling Elder
be of two ſorts, ſome that are

per-

perſonal, and relate to his conver
tion as a Chriſtian, others that a
Official, and relate to his Ruling,
an Office-bearer in the Houſe
God.

1. *Book of Diſcipline*, 8. *head.*
2. *Book of Diſcipline, chap.* 6.

His perſon
qualificatio
or the dut
of his co
verſation, a
the ſame wi
theſe which the Apoſtle requires
the converſation of a Miniſter, 1 *Ti*
3. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. and 6. 11. *Tit.* 1.
7, 8. In which Scri
tures under t
name of ἐπισκοπ
or an Overſeer,
comprehends
theſe Officers w
have the Overſig
and Charge of Souls, and ſets do
wh

The manner of Electing Miniſters and Elders.
Jun. Eccleſ. lib. 2. ch. 2. ch. 3.

at manner of perſons he would
ve them to be in regard of their
nverſation and carriage: I ſhall
ak of theſe things with Applicati-
to the Ruling Elder. That the
ling Elder ought to be of a blame-
s and Chriſtian Converſation, is
ove queſtion, but that it may be
re diſtinctly known what the
ly Ghoſt requires of ſuch in re-
rd of their converſation: *I* ſhall
m theſe Scriptures ſhow, Firſt,
hat the Apoſtle would have them
t to be. Secondly, what he would
ve them to be. The things of the
ſt ſort are theſe: 1. A Ruling El-
r muſt not be given to Wine, they
uſt not be lovers nor followers of
rong drink, nor debord in riot and
ceſs, nor tipple away time in Ale-
ouſes and Taverns. 2. He muſt not
e a ſtriker nor a brawler, nor given

to

to quarrelling and contentions. He must not be covetous, nor greedy of filthy lucre; for, *the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some covet after, they erre from the faith, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows.* 4. He must not be a novice or one newly come to the faith, lest *he be puffed up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the Devil,* the spirits of Novices are not yet well brought lasted, nor brought low enough by frequent exercises of the Cross, and so come to be more easily puffed up therefore there is need that he be a exercised Souldier of Jesus Christ and one who by Experience is taught to know the wiles of the Devil, and is able to endure hardness. 5. He must not be self-willed, adhering pertinaciously, and without reason to his own judgment, and refusing

hearken to the judgment of his brethren, though ſound and wholeſome. 6. He muſt not be ſoon angry, whether upon real or conceived cauſes of provocation.

The things of the ſecond ſort be theſe, 1, He muſt be blameleſs. *h. e.* one who walks without offence towards God and men. 2. If marriſd, *he muſt be the husband of one wife*; ſuch a one who ſhuns all unlawful luſts, ſatisfying himſelf with, and keeping himſelf within the bounds of the Remedy provided of God. 3. He muſt be vigilant, watchfull over his own ſoul, that no temptation prevail upon him, watchful unto every good duty, and to take hold of every opportunity of welldoing. 4. He muſt be ſober, & temperat, of a ſound and humble minde, moderating his own appetite and affections,

fections, and ſatisfying himſelf w
a moderat uſe of the Creatures,
of the things of this world. 5.
muſt be of a good behaviour or
deſt, of a grave and ſtaid, yet o
effable and courteous carriage,
ther light and vain, to the looſing
his Authority, and rendring him
contemptible, nor ſullen, and ſe
pleaſing, to the diſcouraging and ſc
ing away of the flock, by his need
diſtance & auſterity. 6. Given to h
pitality, ready to receive ſtrangers
his Houſe, eſpecially the poor, a
thoſe who are of the houſhold
Faith. 7, *Apt to teach, h. e.* A man
knowledge, and able to inſtruct
thers, one who hath a ready a
willing minde to teach others, whic
is not ſo meant, as if it were requiſi
for the Ruling Elder to be endue
with the Gifts of Exhortation and i
ſtructio

ruction competent to the Paſtor and
eacher, or that he may and ought
imploy himſelf therein, but of
at fitneſs and ability to Teach that
competent to his Calling, which
muſt be ready and willing to ex-
ciſe ſo far as belongs thereto. 8.
oderate, in the firſt *Language*,
ειικής, Rendered patient, 1 *Tim.* 3.
ot rigorous nor exacting the hight
the Law in his dealing, but in his
wn particular of a condeſcending
ture, and remitting ſomething of
ict juſtice. 9. *Patient*, one who
thout wearying, waits on his duty
twithſtanding of difficulties, and
th bear the delayes, untrac-
bleneſs, and injuries of others. 10.
ne who rules well his own houſe,
ving his Children in ſubjection
th all gravity, to which the A-
oſtle adds this reaſon, *if a man*

know

know not how to rule his own tio
how ſhall he take a care of the Ch g
of God. 1 *Tim.* 3. 5. The Ch e
of God is of larger extent than m
Family, and the duties to be th
formed in it, be of greater emin th
and difficulty, and require m
skill, wiſdom, and courage, ie
theſe that are to be performed h
Family. The ruling well of his
houſe, doth import not only a
ty for doing of it, but alſo tha De
make conſcience of, and act a
perform theſe duties that are re n
ed for the right and well orde
of a Chriſtian Family, to
and inſtruct his Children, and
vants in the knowledge of God
take care of their ſanctifying
Lord's day, of their profiting
Godlineſs, of their ſeeking of
and of their ordering their co

tion aright, to read the Scriptures, ng Psalms, pray in the Family, and exhort, admonish, rebuke and mfort all that are of his houshold, their condition doth require; for these duties ly upon all Masters of milies who profess the Gospel, en in a special way upon Elders, ho are appointed to stir up, and before others in the performance ereof. 11. A lover of good men, e whose soul cleaves to those who ar God, having such in estimati- above all others, cherishing them, d conversing ordinarily and fa- iliarly with them. 12. He must be st, one who is straight and up- ght in all his dealings among men, eceiving no man, defrauding no an, withholding nothing from any an that is due to him, but giving every man his own. 13. Holy,

careſull

careful to expreſs the life of Re
on, and power of Godlineſs i
his converſation. 14. He mu
one who holds faſt the faithful W
that he hath been taught, one
is ſtable in the Faith, holding
the truth of God, without wa
ing or turning aſide to error.
ly, he muſt be one who hath g
report of theſe who are with
leſt he fall into reproach and
of the devil, *h. e.* he muſt be
a one, whoſe blameleſs converſat
and ſober and Chriſtian wal
doth extort a teſtimony even
theſe who know not God, and
doth by well-doing put to ſil
the ignorance of fooliſh men,
if any ſpeak evil of him as of an
doer, they may be aſhamed
ſpeak falſly againſt his good con
ſation in Chriſt. The Apoſtle c

preh

ehends all these summarly in two tences. [1 *Tim.* 4. 12. Be thou example of the believers in word, converſation, in charity, in ſpi- in faith, in purity, 1 *Tim.* 6. But thou *O* man of God, flee eſe things, and follow after righte- ſneſs, godlineſs, faith, love, pati- ce, meekneſs.

CHAP. V.

Of the duties of their Calling which are more private.

Book of diſcip. head.

Book diſcip. chap.

THE duties of their Calling are theſe that belong to their watching over, d ruling of the flock, and ey be of two ſorts; ſome that ey are to perform by themſelves

alone, and so m
be called *More p*
vate duties; oth
that they are
perform join
with the reſt of t
Over-ſeers of t
Houſe of G
and may be cal
more publick. The duties of th
Calling, that be more private,
all theſe that private Chriſtians
bound to perform each of them
to another by the Law of char
and love, and theſe are, firſt; to
ſtruct one another, *Joh.* 4. 29. *A*
18, 26. Secondly, to *exhort and*
up one another, to provoke unto l
and good works, *Heb.* 10. 24,
Thirdly, to *admoniſh and rebuke*
another, *Levit.* 19. 17. Firſt, p
vately, and if they will not hearke
th

Aſſer. of the Government of the Church of Scotland. 1. *part. ch.* 2. 1 *part. p.* 15.

Jun. Eccleſ. lib. 2. *cap.* 3. *p.* 107.

n before Witneſſes, & if yet they
l not hearken, then to tell the
urch, and if they will not hear
Church, then to tell the Church;
if they will not hear the Church,
n let them be unto us as Heathens
Publicans, *Math.* 18. 15, 16, 17.
rthly, to comfort the afflicted,
to ſupport the weak, 1 *Theſſ.* 5.
Fifthly, to reſtore thoſe who
fallen, *Gal.* 6. 1. Sixthly; To
oncile theſe who are at variance,
th. 5. 9. Seventhly. To pray one
another, *Jude* 20. Eighthly, To
it the ſick, and thoſe who are in
nds and diſtreſs, *Math*, 25. 36.
l theſe duties Elders are to per-
m to the ſeveral Members of the
ongregation, by vertue of their
lling. The Scriptures do expreſly
ention ſome of them, as incum-
nt unto them, to wit, *admoniſh-*

ing these over whom God hath ... *them*, 1 Thess. 5. 12. *visiting* ... *praying over the sick*, *Jam.* 5. ... *feeding the flock* by Instruction, ... hortation, Rebuke and Comfor... such a way as is competent to ... station, *Act* 20. 28. The rest ... may warrantably gather by anal... and proportion from these; If ... vat Christians be obliged ther... much more are Christian Elders, ... have the charge of Souls, in a ... cial way obliged thereto. Th... things are well expressed in the si...

Chap. of the sec...

2 *Book of Dis.* Book of Discipl...

cip. 6. *ch.* [As the Pastors ...

Doctors (*say th*...

should be diligent in teaching ... sowing the seed of the Word; so ... Elders should be careful in seek... of the fruit of the same of the P...

It appertains to them to assist Pastor, in examination of them come to the Lords Table. *Item* visiting the sick, they should use the Acts of the Assemblies all particular as general, to be put execution carefully; they should diligent to admonish all men of eir duty, according to the rule of e Evangel; things that they cannot correct by privat admonition, ey should bring to the Eldership.

From what hath been said concerning these duties of Ruling ders these three things follow; st, that they ought to be men of h ability, as are in some measure le to instruct, exhort admonish, uke, comfort, pray, and do these ties now mentioned. Secondly, hat it is needful for them, not on- to have some measure of ability

for these things, but also to
some measure of dexterity, wisd
experience, tenderness in follo
the same. Thirdly, That they
well acquainted with the condi
of the Congregation, and the M
bers thereof, and therefore be
ful to observe their carriage,
frequently to visit and take insp
on of Families, that they may
struct the ignorant, exhort the
gligent, admonish the sloathful,
rebuke those who walk disord
comfort the afflicted, establish t
who waver, visit the sick, enc
age these who do well, and see
and godliness promoted in Fam
and every one edifying anothe
love, walking in the fear of
Lord, and comfort of the
Ghost.

CHAP. VI.

Of these duties which are more publick, and which they are to perform joyntly with others.

Book of disc. 3. head.

Book 6. ch. The office and duties of Elders prefixed to the Ps:

THe duties of Elders which are more publick, and which they are to perform joyntly with others, are these which ly upon them in the Assemblies or Courts of the Church, which are made up of Preaching Elders, Teaching Elders, and Ruling Elders: These Assemblies are in our Church of four sorts; either they are of the Elders of particular Congregations, which

is

is the Church Session, or of the
ders of moe Congregations than
lying near together, which is
Presbyterie, or of the Elders of m
Presbyteries then one; which is
Provincial Synod, or of the Eld
Commissioners from all the Presb
teries in the Land, which is the
neral or National Assembly:
these we may adde a fifth sort,
wit, that which is made up of Elde
from all or diverse Nations professi
the Faith of Jesus Christ.

Whilst we speak of Elders,
which the Assemblies of the Chur
are made up, we mean all sorts
Elders: Ministers, Doctors, a
Ruling Elders. It is true, that in th
Congregations of our Church, be
cause of the want of maintenance
there be few, or no Doctors,
Teaching Elders distinct from Pa
stor

ors or *Ministers*, who perform the ties both of the Preaching *Elder*, d of the Teaching *Elder*, only in e Schools of Divinity are such.

Book of Dis-pline ch. 6. d chap. 7.

In all Assemblies of the Church, Ruling *Elders* being thereto rightly called, have power to sit, write, bate, vote, and conclude in all atters that are handled therein, *Acts* 15. 2. and 6. 22, 23.

Book of Dis-pline ch. 7.

The things which be handled in the Assemblies of the Church, be either matters of aith, matters of Order, matters of Discipline, or that which concerneth the sending of Church-officers, ccording to which they have a ourfold power: 1. That which is alled *Dogmatick*, whereby they

judge of Truth and Error, in po ho
of *Doctrine*, according to the W ffi
of God only. 2. That which is All
lee *Diatactick*, by which they disc ise
and judge of the circumstances he
these things that belong to the whe
ship of God, as Times, Places, Pre
sons, and all such particulars in to
clesiastick Affairs as are not det Po
mined in the Word, according an
the general Rules thereof, concerci
ing order and decency, avoiding be
scandal, doing all to the glory o
God; and to the edifying of t 6
Church. 3. That which is *Critick* c
Corrective, by which Censures a
exercised upon the scandalous an
obstinate, and such as are penite
again admitted to the Ordinance
Fellowship & Society of the Churd
4. That which is called *Exousiastick*
by vertue of which they send, an
thori

horize and give power to Church-officers to serve in the house of God. All these Assemblies are not to exercise all these powers, but to keep themselves within their due bounds, the Inferior leaving these things that are of more common concernment to the Superiour; but in all these Powers, Ruling Elders have a share, and do put forth the same in exercise, according to the measure that belongs to the Assembly whereof they are Members, *Acts* 15. 6. 22, 23. Howbeit the execution of some decrees of the Church-assemblies; such as the Imposition of hands, the pronouncing the Sentence of excommunication, the receiving of Penitents, the Intimation of the Deposition of Ministers, and such like, do belong to Ministers alone.

These being the Duties and

Powers

Powers of Ruling Elders in the A
ſemblies of the Church, its requiſ
that they be indued with ſuch abi
ties and qualifications as are needf
for the exerciſing thereof; but becau
all Ruling Elders are not alway
called to ſit in all theſe Aſſemblies
But one from every Seſſion ſufficet
to the Presbytery and Provinci
Synods, and a few from every Pre
bytery, and from greater Congre
gations, or Burghs therein to th
General Aſſembly, as alſo a few fro
the whole Church throughout
Land, to a more univerſal Aſſem
bly; Therefore, though it is to be
wiſhed and endeavoured, that al
Elders may have due qualificatio
for all theſe things, and though ſpe
cial care is to be taken every where
to chooſe the moſt qualified, yet in
particular Congregations men may

be

be choſen Elders, who have not ſuch a meaſure of all theſe qualifications; they being otherwiſe men of a blameleſs and Chriſtian Converſation, and having ſuch a meaſure of knowledge, and prudence, as is fit for Governing that Congregation, and judging of the things that are handled in the Seſſion thereof, which for the moſt part are matters of ſcandal, and trying and admitting of Penitents; but if there be any who are not of a blameleſs and Chriſtian converſation, and have not ſome meaſure of theſe qualifications requibered by the Word of God in a Ruling all Elder, no Congregation ought to nuchooſe any ſuch, nor any Seſſion or e Presbytery to admit them to the recharge, for it is not ſeemly that the inſervants of corruption ſhould have ayiuthority to judge in the Kirk of pe God,

God, and if any ſuch have been admitted, they are to endeavour the removal of them, as they would not partake of their ſin, and be found guilty before the Lord of the blood of ſouls, which cannot but ſuffer prejudice through negligence or ill guiding of ſuch men.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Duty of Elders in cenſuring ſcandals and ſcandalous perſons, and receiving of penitents.

BEcauſe the Government and Duty of Elders in Congregations, lyes for moſt part in cenſuring ſcandals and ſcandalous perſons, and trying and admitting of penitents. Therefore it is fit to ſpeak ſomewhat of their right way of following their Duty in theſe things.

1. F

1. Book of Discip. concerning Persons subject to discipline
2. Book of Discip. ch. 1. and 7.

1. For the Persons about whom their censures are to be exercised, it is all the Members of the Congregation indifferently and impartially, without respect of persons, the rich as well as the poor, the high as well as the low, their friends, kinsmen, alliance, neighbours and acquaintance, as well as others. *Ja.* 2. sharply reproves these who *have the faith of our* Lord *Jesus Christ the Lord of glory with respect of persons*, by preferring the rich to the poor; and *Solomon* says, that *divers weights, and divers measures are an abomination to the Lord*, must it not then be worthy of rebuke to have the censures of our Lord Jesus with respect of persons, and to weigh

the rich and the poor, the high and the low in divers ballances, by taking notice of the one, and passing by the other. 2. *It* is incumbent to them to exercise their power, not only over the people of the Congregation, but also over these of their own number, as all Christians, so so they in a special way who are yoke-fellows in the work of the Lord, ought to consider and admonish one another, and if any of them be found negligent, or insufficient, or do in any thing miscarry, to the offence of the Gospel, and blaming of the eldership, he is to be censured by the Minister, or Ministers, and the rest of the Elders, as the degree

1. *Book of Discip. 8. head. The weekly Assem. of Ministers, elders and Deacons prefixed to the old Pf.*

of his offence doth require, the Apostle *Paul*, *Acts* 20. 28. gives charge to all Elders to take heed to themselves, as well as to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made them Over-seers. 3. As all sorts of scandalous persons, whether in the Congregation, or amongst themselves: so all sorts of scandals and offences are to be taken notice of by them; The Apostle 2 *Thes.* 3. 6. commands that *we withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly*, and amongst disorderly walkers, he doth *vers.* 11. reckon *idle persons*, who do not work at all, but are busie bodies; intimating to us, that even these scandals and disorders, which are by many little taken notice of, & lookt upon as no faults, ought to be taken notice of by the Church, that all her members may walk honestly, and as

it

it becomes the Gospel of Jesus hris
The Acts of our Church doth ap
point, that whatsoever it be tha
might spot that Christian Congrega
tion, ought not to escape either ad
monition or censures: So in the or
der of *Ecclesiastick* Discipline, 1567
Two great neglects there be that b
ignorance or custom have crept in a
mong *Elders* in many Congregation
1. That they do not take notice o
the omission of Duties, as well as o
the commission of faults; as for in
stance, If there be any member of th
Congregation who lives idlely, an
waits not upon his Calling, who i
not given to Prayer, who is not cha
ritable to the poor, who waits no
upon the publick Ordinances; i
there be any Master of a Family wh
prays not in his Family, who doe
not bring up his Children in the nur

tur

ture and admonition of the Lord; or 2. That they do not take notice of the commission of faults, and scandals of all sorts, but of some few only; such as fornication, adultery, and profaning of the Lords Day, and suffering many others, such as tipling, drunkenness, filthy communication, lying, cursing, swearing, oppression, reproaching of Piety, and Godliness, &c. to pass without observation.

1. *Book of Discip. chap. 7. sect. 6.*

4. Elders are to take heed, that they bring in no civil questions and Debates before the Assemblies of the Church, and that they do not use nor inflict any civil mulct, or punishment, upon persons convict of scandal, these being proper to the Civil Magistrat; The Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the Cen-

Censures thereof being Spiritual, and not of this world, *John* 18. 36.

The Order of Ecclesiastick Discipline, appointed by the Assembly 1567. *And in the Order of Excommunication, commanded to be Printed by the Assembly* 1571.

5. In the taking notice of offences, they are to observe this Order: If the Offence be privat, and known to but a few, then are they in the first place to admonish the offender privatly, and if he hearken to the admonition and amend it, needs go no further, nor be dilated to the Church; If he do not hearken nor amend, then is the Elder to take with him some of his Brethren, and to admonish the offender before witnesses, and if he hearken, the Church needs not be acquainted therewith, but if he

he deſpiſe this ſecond admonition, then is he to be dilated by the Elder to the Church, that he may be called before the Seſſion, and convicted and cenſured by them; This is the Order commanded and preſcribed by Jeſus Chriſt, *Mat.* 18 15, 16, 17. if the offence be Publick and open, then is the offender without ſuch previous admonition to be dilated to the Seſſion, that according to the Apoſtles Rule, 1 *Tim.* 5. 20. *They that ſin* (meaning openly) *may be rebuked before all, that others may fear.*

2. *Book of Diſcip-line*, Ch. 6. ſect. 12.

6. In theſe dilations, they are to take heed that they do not, upon every rumor or jealouſie, or ſuſpition, bring men to be queſtioned Publickly, as ſcandalous walkers, but firſt

to

to be careſull to make diligent and prudent enquiry about the truth of the matter, and to ſee if it can be proven by Witneſſes, or that the ſcandall thereof be common and flagrant, or attended with pregnant likely-hoods, and preſumptions of truth, before they bring it in publick, that ſo it may appear to the Congregation, and to the party themſelves, that they are not queſtioned and challenged without cauſe.

7. In the matter of dilation and cenſure, they are in the fear of God, and in the ſimplicity and ſincerity of of their hearts, to take heed that fear or favour, or ſoliſtations, or threatnings, or gifts, or bribes, make them not paſſe by, or wink at the fault of any, and that paſſion, or malice, or privat quarrels, and particulars make them not to dilate, or rip up, or

cenſure

censure the miscarriage of any, and that they carry with all tenderneſſe and compaſſion, and moderation, towards the offender, that they may approve themſelves to his conſcience; that nothing puts them one to dilate him, and proceed againſt him, but the conſcience of duty, and a deſire to gain his ſoul, and to purge the Church of ſcandals, *Gal.* 6. 1. 2 *Cor.* 2. 2. Its a high provocation before the Lord, for a Chutch-Officer to abuſe the power given him of God, for edifying his Body the Church, unto the ſatisfying his own paſſions and corrupt affections.

8. They are to take heed, that they do not uſe the Cenſures of the Church as a bodily pnniſhment or penance to ſatisfie for ſin, but a ſpiritual medicine, for humbling and gaining of the ſoul; all Church cenſures, even

even Excommunication it ſelf, whic
is the moſt terrible and deſtroying
like cenſure, being ordained of Go
for this end, 1 *Cor.* 5. The Apoſtl
commands to *deliver the inceſtuo*
perſon to Satan, not that he may ſati
fie for his ſin, but that the *ſpirit m*
be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſ
Chriſt. The word Satisfaction ma
admit of a tolerable conſtruction i
Church-cenſures, in order to the r
moving of the ſcandal before men
but this being ſo much abuſed in th
Popiſh Church, and the hearts
men, being ſo prone to true Goſpe
repentance, to a meer legal penanc
and to conceive, that by meer o
ward ſubmiſſion and obedience
the cenſures of the Church, that t
guilt of their ſin is done away befo
God, Therefore Elders would ca
fully ſhun every thing that may gi
occaſi

ccasion to the fostering this perni-
ious opinion, and take pains to in-
truct offenders in the true nature
nd ends of the censures of the Kirk.

he form & order f publick repent- rce perfixed to e old Pſ.

9. A great part of Elders work, is, to travel and take pains with scanda-lous persons who are now convict, to ring them to repentance, by seaſon-ble and frequent conference, in-tructing, exhorting and admonish-ng them, untill they they perceive ome measure of true and earnest hu-biliation wrought in them for their n, and them fitted to evidence and eclare the same in publick before he Congregation, that so the scan-al may be removed.

10. They are not to desire or ap-point any to professe repentance be-

fore the Congregation, untill the
ſignes of repentance appear in them
The Inceſtuous *Corinthian* ſorrowed
exceedingly before the Apoſtle did
any thing concerning the receiving
of him; And the Diſcipline of our
Church appoints Miniſters and El-
ders ſharply to examine theſe who
offer themſelves to repentance, what
fear and terrour they have of Gods
judgements, what hatred of ſin, and
ſorrow for the ſame, and what ſenſe
and feeling they have of Gods
mercies? In which if they be igno-
rant, they ought diligently to be in-
'ſtructed; for it is (ſay they) but
'mocking to put ſuch to publick re-
pentance, who neither underſtand
'what ſin is, what repentance is, what
'grace is, nor by whom Gods mercies
'and favors are purchaſed? And that
after he is inſtructed in theſe things
an

and brought to have some taste of Gods judgements, especially of his mercies in Jesus Christ, he may be presented before the publick Church; These things are set down in the form and order of Publick Repentance, appointed by the Assembly 1567.

Lastly, when the signs and evidences of true and unfeigned Repentance do appear in these who have offended, Elders would shew themselves ready and willing to receive them with all tenderness and compassion, and to forgive and comfort them, and confirm their love towards them, 2. *Cor.* 2. 7, 8.

Book of disip. ch. 6. Sect. 4

The number of Elders in every Congregation cannot be well limited or determined, but it is to be more or less, according to the quantity of

the Congregation, and neceſſitie
and condition of the people, and
men qualified and fit for the Charg
can be found. It hath been an
vil cuſtom in ſome Congregation
that rather than they would wa
any of their wonted number, the
would chooſe unqualified men, an
that in ſeveral Congregations, th
office of Elder hath been given t
thoſe of the richer and higher for
as due to ſuch (though haply of n
experience in the things of Jeſu
Chriſt, and in many things of an un
tender and blame-worthy converſa
tion) becauſe of their condition i
the world, or conceiving that the
ſecular power and credit was the be
means to promote the Kingdom
Jeſus Chriſt, and men qualified wit
knowledge and experience in th
things pertaining to ſouls, and of
Chr

Christian and godly carriage have been passed by, because of a mean condition in the World. Better it is that the number be few, before we choose the ignorant and scandalous; and that they be of a low degree, if godly, than of a high degree, if otherwise.

Acts of the Ass. 1646.

That Elders may the more conveniently discharge their duty; It is convenient that the Congregation be divided into so many parts, and that some competent part be assigned to the more peculiar care and inspection of every Elder; yet so, as he neglect not to take heed to all the flock of God, over which the *Holy Ghost* hath made him an over-seer.

CHAP. I.

Of Deacons.

Of their Names.

THat we may also understand what doth belong unto Deacons, we shall speak of them shortly, after the same order. 1. Of their Name. 2. Of their *Institution*. 3. Of their Calling. 4. Of their duty and qualificacion.

1. *Book of discip. ch.* 8.

The word Deacon largely taken, signifies any servant or Minister, *Matth.* 23. 11. Therefore in the New Testament, it doth sometimes comprehend all Church-Officers, even the Apostles themselves, 1 *Cor.* 3. 5. Because every Church-officer is appointed of God, for perfecting of the

the Saints, for the work of the Ministery, εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, and edifying the Body of Christ. When we speak of Deacons in the Kirk, it is not taken in this large sense, for any Church-officer of whatsoever sort, but for a certain kind of Church Officers distinct from Pastors, Teachers and Elders, to whom the collection and distribution of the Goods of the Church doth belong, for the supply of the necessities of the poor.

Eph. 4. 12.

1. *Book of Discipline* ch. 8.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the Institution of Deacons.

THE Institution of the Office of Deacon in the Church of Christ, is Divine; it's a special Ordinance and Appointment of Jesus Christ, that there should be Deacons in his House, *Act.* 6. 3. The Apostle gives command to the Disciples to choose out among themselves men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and of Wisdom, whom they might appoint over the business of the poor, which was accordingly done, as may be seen in the 5 and 6 verses of that Chapter: Neither was this a temporary institution upon this particular occasion, for the Church

of

of *Jerusalem* only, but for all the Churches of Christ to the end of the world; Therefore the Apostle *Paul* in several of his Epistles to the Churches, doth mention them, *Rom.* 12. 8. He exhorteth *him that gives or imparts*, (*h. e.* the Deacon, to whom the care of giving and distributing is committed) to do it with simplicity, 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. he reckons *helps*, (*h. e.* Deacons who are appointed for helping the poor) among these Officers whom God hath set in his Church; and writing to the *Philippians*, he directs his Epistle to all the Saints in Christ, with the Bishops (or Overseers, under whom he comprehends Ministers, Teachers and Elders) and to the Deacons, 1 *Tim.* wherein he gives Rules concerning

1. *Book of Discipline* 8. chap.

the qualification and carriage of
Church-officers, he treats of the De
con at large, chap. 3. 8, 9, 10, 1
12, 13.

1. *Book of Dif.* ch. 2. p. 74.

From the Divine I
ſtitution of Deacon
we gather 1. That th
Deacon is a diſtin
Officer from the Elder; it is a de
fect and fault in ſome Congregati
ons, that they put no difference be
twixt thoſe two, but ſo confound
and mingles them together, as
they were both one, either appoint
ing none for the Office of Deacon
but leaving that charge alſo upon th
Elders, or elſe giving the Deacon
the ſame power and imployment
with the Elders. It's true, what
ſoever the Deacon may do by vertue
of his Office, that ſame may be done
by an Elder, as whatſoever is done
by

by an Elder, may be done by a Miniſter: becauſe the higher and more eminent offices in the Church, doth include the powers of the lower.

It's alſo true, that the Deacons may aſſiſt in judgment with the Miniſter and Elders, and be helping to them in theſe things that concerns the overſight of the Congregation, by information and advice; Yet it is neceſſary that Congregations ſhould ſo far regard the Ordinance, and reverence the Wiſdom of God, in appointing theſe *O*fficers, as to have both *E*lders and *D*eacons, and to preſerve them diſtinct in their actings and operations, not giving to the *D*eacon, or ſuffering him to aſſume the Elders office. 2. That Deacons are not to count light of this imploy-

1 *Book of Diſcipline* p. 57.

ment,

ment, or any others to esteem light
ly of them, because they are calle
thereunto, and do exercise the same
but that they themselves, and al
others ought to look upon it as on
of these holy and honourable Im
ployments, which the wisdom o
God hath thought fit to appoint in
his house, for supplying the neces
sities of the *Saints*. The Lord Jesu
himself did not disdain to wash hi
Disciples feet; Angels are all of them
ministering Spirits, sent forth to mi
nister for their sakes who are ap
pointed to be heirs of Salvation; why
then should any think it below them
to serve the Church of Christ, and to
minister to the Saints in this *Imploy*
ment? 1 *Tim.* 3. 13.

CHAP

CHAP. III.

Of the Calling of Deacons.

2 *Book of Discip.* chap. 8. NOne is to step into this Office, but he that is lawfully called thereto; Unto their Calling its needful, First, That they have abilities and gifts fit for the charge, together with an honest purpose of heart to serve the Lord faithfully in the discharge of the same, by seeking his honour, and the good of the Church. 2. That they be chosen by the Congregation in which they are to serve, which choice is to be made after the same manner, as that of Ruling Elder. 3. That tryal be taken by the Minister and Elders, concerning their conversation, that it be blameless and ho-

holy: And concerning their gifts, that they have that tenderneſs, diſcretion, dexterity and prudence, that is fit for that Imployment, and that they be admitted to their Charge with Prayer and Supplication, and opening of the Word concerning their duty publickly in the Congregation, where they are ſolemnly to engage themſelves to be faithful in the truſt committed to them of God. *Act.* 6. 3, 5, 6. 1 *Tim.* 3. 10.

CHAP. IV.

Of their Duty.

Firſt of their Converſation.

THeir Duty is either that which concerns their Converſation, or their office and calling; for their converſation, the Apoſtle ſhews what it muſt be, 1 *Tim.* 3. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

They

They must not be double tongued, nor lyars, nor dissemblers, nor deceivers. 2. They must not be given to much wine, nor tiplers, nor drunkards, nor lovers, nor followers of strong drink. 3. They must not be greedy of filthy lucre, nor such as are covetous, and whose hearts run after the things of the world. 4. They must be grave men, of a posi'd and stayed carriage, and not of a light and vain behaviour. 5. They must be such as hold fast the mystery of Faith in a pure conscience, *h.e.* Who do not only know the Doctrine of the Gospel, but do hold fast the Faith thereof without wavering, and study to have a good conscience, in walking answerably thereto. 6. They must be the husband of one wife, such as abstain from all unlawful lusts, satisfying themselves

with

with the Remedy allowed of God. 7 They must be such as rule their own houses and their children well, such as command and instruct their children and household to keep the way of the Lord, going before them in the practice of piety and godliness and all holy and religious duties.

CHAP. V.

Of the Duties of their Calling.

THE Duties that Deacons are bound to perform in their calling, may be reduced to these heads: 1. That they be careful to take exact notice of such as are poor in the Congregation, and have not wherewith to maintain themselves. 2. That they be careful from time to time to col-

2. *Book of Discipline* chap. 8.

lect

ect and receive from the ſeveral Members of the Congregation, and ſtrangers that come among them, what the Lord ſhall incline their hearts to give for a ſupply of the neceſſities of the poor; and in a ſeaſonable and Chriſtian way, to ſtir up and exhort to Charity and Liberality, that the more may be given. 3. That what is received and collected by them, be faithfully delivered, that it may be put in the Treaſury of the Congregation. 4. That they do timouſly make known the ſeveral conditions and neceſſities of the ſeveral poor within the Congregation, to the Church Seſſion, that proviſion may be appointed accordingly for each of them, that ſo the poor may not be put to begging, to the grief of their ſpirits, and reproach of the Goſpel. 5. That they be careful, ho-

honestly and in simplicity, with
respect of persons, to distribute
deliver to the poor what is appoin
for supply of their necessities; an
they be Orphans, and young o
or such who have no knowledg
understanding, nor ability to disp
and order the things that conc
their food and rayment: That
Deacons honestly imploy and
stow what is given for their use, t
they may be supplyed in these thi
6. That they be careful that what
longs to the poor be not dilapidat
nor applyed to any other use; a
if that there be any stock in
Church Treasure, it be improven
the best advantage, for the benefit
use of the poor; Yet so that the po
be rather always supplyed, than M
neys treasured up for a vain she
7. That they be careful to take not

of these who are sick, that they may acquaint the Ministers and Elders therewith, for visiting of them; and if that they be poor, their necessities may be supplied.

That Deacons may the more conveniently discharge their Duty, *Its* fit that some part of the Congregation be assigned to every one of them for the better inspection of the poor thereof, and that the Diets of collecting for the poor be divided amongst them.

The number of *D*eacons in every Congregation is to be according to the proportion of the Congregation, and of the poor therein; and though there be no necessity of an equal number of Elders and Deacons, yet it is fit that each Elder have some Deacon to be assisting to him in the bounds of which he hath more peculiar,

culiar inſpection, that ſo both th
one and the other may diſcharg
their duty, with the greater facili
to themſelves, and with the greate
benefit and advantage of the Co
gregation.

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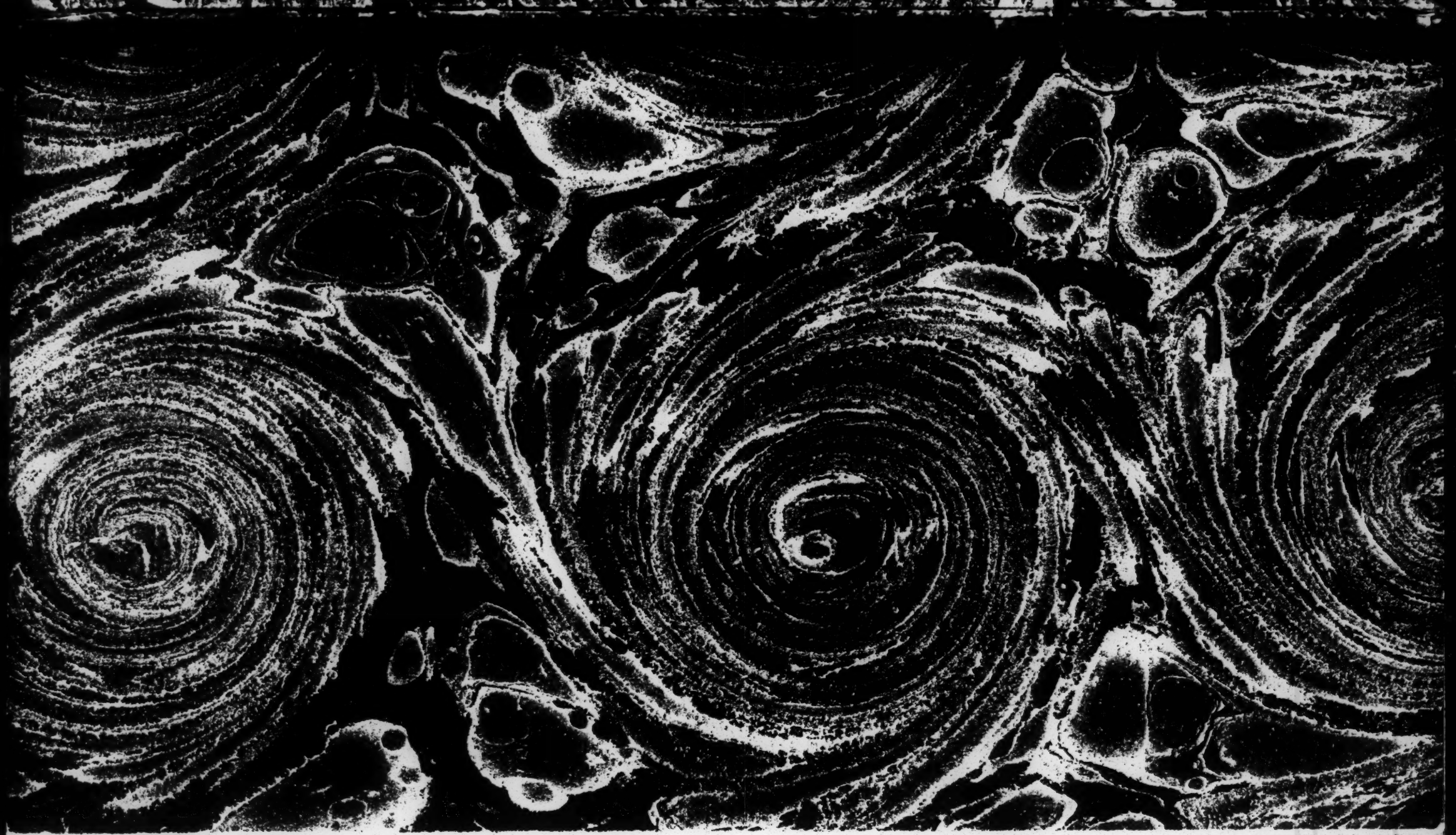
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